



How Taiwan Could Earn Trump a Nobel Peace Prize

By

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“Words matter,” [explained](#) Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, while delivering a statement on why President Donald Trump rebranded the Department of Defense the Department of War. Trump’s [executive order](#) states that the new name signals American resolve and better “ensures peace through strength.” Earlier this year, Trump signed another executive order, “[Restoring Names that Honor American Greatness](#),” which changed the name of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America.

During his first term, Trump engaged in other symbolic actions that upended the status quo, such as when he moved the US embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, [declaring](#), “We finally acknowledge the obvious: that Jerusalem is Israel’s capital.” He also became the first sitting US president to [meet](#) with a North Korean leader, smashing decades of diplomatic norms.

Given Trump’s willingness to talk to anyone, to call it like he sees it, and to use symbolism to project American strength, it should come as no surprise that he is unafraid of reconsidering policies related to China and Taiwan. He has already done so.

By almost every measure, Taiwan is an independent and sovereign country. Thus, upgrading the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT), the de facto embassy, to an official US embassy is worthy of consideration, even if it would mean a fundamental change to American Taiwan policy.

Such a move would undoubtedly cause a Chinese backlash, but it would likely make it harder for China to claim that Taiwan is a rebellious province—a position unsupported by history. Taiwan is Taiwanese. Eliminating names like Chinese Taipei at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics is a good idea and recognizes Taiwan for what it is—an independent country.

If shaking hands with a North Korean dictator is okay, then shaking hands with a Taiwanese president should also be acceptable. Kowtowing to China is the wrong answer. The truth is, the US is preparing to militarily defend Taiwan. Restoring the formal alliance with Taiwan is a natural step. Sacrificing Taiwan for cheap Chinese goods and a more powerful China is a bad idea.

Trump once famously [claimed](#), “I alone can fix it,” referring to America’s broken system of governance. In the special case of US-Taiwan relations, he may be correct.

As part of his quest to “make America great again,” Trump could begin reversing the damage done by former President Jimmy Carter, who abrogated the alliance with Taiwan in 1979. That was a mistake that deserves correcting.

Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te (賴清德) recently [argued](#) that Trump would deserve a Nobel Peace Prize if he could convince Chinese President Xi Jinping (習近平) to renounce the use of force to annex Taiwan. This would presumably entail the repeal of China’s 2005 [Anti-Secession Law](#), if not China’s formal recognition of Taiwan’s sovereignty.

To have any chance of success, Trump would need to give Xi a compelling reason for choosing peace. He would need to give Taiwan a credible way to deter an invasion, at least until China proved trustworthy.



Nuclear weapons are currently the only weapons terrifying enough to accomplish these objectives. This is a fact underscored by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who last year told a European Council summit, “Either Ukraine will have nuclear weapons and that will be our protection or we should have some sort of alliance [such as NATO].”

One thing that Trump and Xi have in common is that they both wish to go down in history as the greatest leaders of their respective countries. Until now, Xi has aimed to achieve greatness by conquering Taiwan—something no previous Chinese communist leader did.

Invading Taiwan would be a costly gamble, risking trillions of dollars and millions of lives, with an uncertain chance of success. On the other hand, committing to peace is simple and costs nothing. Finding a way for China to preserve “face” is the critical hurdle for the US.

President Lai did not mention it, but if the Nobel Peace Prize were awarded to Trump, then Xi would be a co-recipient. That may be a point worth considering.

Imagine two versions of the future, one in which Xi orders the invasion of Taiwan and one in which he wins the Nobel Peace Prize for recognizing Taiwan’s independence. It is the latter scenario that would ensure both Xi and Trump go down in history as great leaders.

That is a conversation worth having in future meetings between Trump and Xi. China is fundamentally an aggressive nation, but that aggression can be checked while still ensuring that the Chinese Communist Party maintains international respect.

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